Doc. 300.3.1/1

External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of Departmental Evaluation)

Date: 23/04/2026

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  University of Cyprus
- **Town: Nicosia**
- **School/Faculty: Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences**
- **Department: Department of Chemistry**
- **Programme(s) of study - Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

Programme 1 – BSc

In Greek:

Χημεία [4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (BSc)]

In English:

Chemistry [4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of Science (BSc)]

Language(s) of instruction: Greek and English

Programme 2 – MSc

In Greek:

Χημεία [4-8 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 120 ECTS, Μάστερ (MSc)]

In English:

Chemistry [4-8 academic semesters, 120 ECTS, Master of Science (MSc)]

Language(s) of instruction: English

Programme 3 – PhD

In Greek:

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the "Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws" of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

Χημεία [4-8 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Διδακτορικό (PhD)]

In English:

Chemistry (4-8 academic years, 240 ECTS, PhD)

Language(s) of instruction: English

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The EEC enjoyed the visit of the department and university. The program was well suited to discuss all aspects of the department and program within the university with a selection of the staff and students involved and we appreciated the openness in all conversations. Strengths and limitations were discussed openly, including the national and university framework they have to work in. All clearly care about the department, the students and the educational programs they are running. Overall, we had the impression of a transparent, well-organized and supportive process that has enabled us to understand and comment constructively on the program as we were asked to do.

We would also like to thank Emily Alexandridou of the CYQAA for all of her help in organizing our visit.

The program of our visit:
Day 1

09:00 – 09:10 A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee [10 minutes]

09:10 – 09:40 A meeting with the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Professor Tatiana Eleni Synodinou, who is also the Chairwoman of the Internal QA Committee of the University

09:40 – 10:40 A meeting with the Dean of the School, the Head(s) of the relevant department and all faculty members for a short presentation and discussion of the School's / Department's structure.

10:40 – 10:55 Coffee Break

Programme 1: Bachelor in Chemistry

10:55 – 12:05 A meeting with the Head(s) of the relevant department and the Coordination Committee of the programme

12:05 – 12:25 Lab Observation CHE110 - Laboratory of Classic Methods of Chemical Analysis, Special Teaching Staff Dr. Elena Loizou, ΘΕΕ 02, Lab 005 (Ground Flour, Wing A)

12.25 - 13.00 Onsite tour to the facilities of the department (labs etc)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00 – 14:30 A site visit to the library

14:30 – 15:00 A meeting exclusively with members from the Administrative Staff (QA session)

15:00 – 15:10 Coffee Break

15:10-16:10 A meeting ONLY with members of the teaching staff on each course of the Bachelor programme for all the years of study (QA session).

16:10 – 16:55 A meeting with ONLY students and graduates (4 participants, 1 ill) of the Bachelor programme.

Day 2

Programme 2: Master in Chemistry

09:00-10:00 A meeting with the Head(s) of the relevant department and the Coordination Committee of the programme

Programme 3: PhD in Chemistry

10:00-11:00 A meeting with the Head(s) of the relevant department and the Coordination Committee of the programme

11:00 - 11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:15 A meeting ONLY with members of the teaching staff on each course of the MSc and PhD programmes for all the years of study (QA session)

12:15 – 12:50 A meeting with ONLY students and graduates (5 – 15 participants) of the MSc and PhD programmes.

12:50 – 13:50 Lunch Break

13:50 – 14:35 A meeting with ONLY External Stakeholders for the programme(s)

14:35 – 15:00 Working Coffee Break - A meeting ONLY between the EEC members, to sum up and discuss for any additional clarifications needed, before the Exit Discussion

15:00 – 15:30 Exit Discussion with the Dean of the School, the Head(s) of the relevant department, the coordinator(s) of the programme(s) - and the Director(s) of Academic Quality and Compliance (questions, clarifications)

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Professor Sophia Yaliraki	Professor	Imperial College London
Professor Michael Pittelkow	Professor	University of Copenhagen
Professor Moniek Tromp	Professor	University of Groningen
Dr. Elena Ioannou Papayianni	Treasurer of the Chemists' Registration Council	Chemists Registration Council
Charalampos Christodoulou	Student	Cyprus University of Technology

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.
- At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:
  (a) sub-areas
  (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
  (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.
- The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.
- Under each assessment area it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:

  Findings

  A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

  Strengths

  A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

  Areas of improvement and recommendations

  A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.
- The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.
- The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding each programme of study as a whole.
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- **1.1. Policy for quality assurance**
- **1.2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- **1.3. Public information**
- **1.4. Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:
  - has a formal status and is publicly available
  - supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes
  - supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance
  - ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud
  - guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff
  - supports the involvement of external stakeholders

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- The programme of study:
  - is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes
  - is designed by involving students and other stakeholders
  - benefits from external expertise
  - reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)
  - is designed so that it enables smooth student progression
  - is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS

- defines the expected student workload in ECTS
- includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate
- is subject to a formal institutional approval process
- results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
- is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date
- is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme
- is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholde

1.3 Public information

Standards

- Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:
  - selection criteria
  - intended learning outcomes
  - qualification awarded
  - teaching, learning and assessment procedures
  - pass rates
  - learning opportunities available to the students
  - graduate employment information

1.4 Information management

Standards

- Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:
  - key performance indicators
  - profile of the student population
  - student progression, success and drop-out rates
  - students' satisfaction with their programmes
  - learning resources and student support available
  - career paths of graduates

- Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

You may also consider the following questions:

- What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?
- Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?
- How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?
- Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?
- Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?
- How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?
- How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?
- What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?

- How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?
- **How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?**
- What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?
- Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?
- How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?
- Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?
- What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The Quality Assurance policy and system are governed centrally and implemented per department and program.
Internal and external stakeholders are involved in setting up and evaluating the quality of the programs.
Clear procedures are in place for the development, implementation and assessment of the programs, as well as the support services, for both staff and students.
Several parts of the quality assessment process require program specific assessment criteria (e.g. to obtain BSc, MSc or PhD degree), which have not been specified by the department. The discussions with the staff seem to suggest this is left to the supervisor and examiners.
External stakeholders are very happy with the interaction with the department on research and teaching and are very pleased with the knowledge and skills of the graduates.
Students are very happy with all programmes and the personalised supervision and support they experience. Part time studying is made possible, esp. important for students who need to work to ensure their finances or have care responsibilities.

Findings for BSc

Student numbers vary considerably every year and the overall drop-out is about 25%. This is not an uncommon number, also for other places across Europe. Here, the staff indicate the following reasons: other options at private universities, the attraction of health studies, and the 'intensity' of the program (attendance required, esp for lab work), are mentioned as reasons for the drop out. Pass rates are very different per course and examination and grading is not discussed and aligned. The students are very happy with the program and seem to be able to find jobs or a suitable MSc program after (often outside Cyprus).

Findings for MSc

The number of MSc students is very low and these are mostly students that want to stay in Cyprus for personal reasons. MSc students have to pay fees and do not get a salary, unless they are accepted as a Teaching Assistant in a course (for which typically PhDs are preferred). The limited student number limits the courses students can follow, since each course requires a minimum of 5 students (to be sustainable teaching-wise).
Students are very happy with the program, but brought up the number of electives and their financial position. Also the financial position of the research group sometimes limits what they can do in their research projects.

Findings for PhD

The number of PhD students in the department is low (on average 1-2 PhD students per staff member). Moreover, PhD students do not get a salary and have to pay a tuition fee. The academic staff will have to cover their consumables, which is often not easy, because research income is low. The academics are fairly happy about the funding they get from the department (university) for basic consumables and some small equipment, but this is not enough for advanced experiments, travel etc for PhD students. Only students employed on a research grant from national or European funding organisations might get an income and have (extra) money for their research and some travel. Whereas the university had a scholarship system available, that was recently phased out. PhD students can get some income if they are accepted as a Teaching Assistant, but they feel the total amount is limited given the cost of living.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The small scale and personalised supervision is a great asset of all programs. Moreover, the laboratories and infrastructure are excellent, providing students with expertise in a large range of instruments and methods. The graduates are well prepared for a job in Cyprus.

Strengths for BSc

Please see above. The fourth year, a research oriented year, is highly appreciated by the students, staff and ECC and prepares them well for either a MSc program or a job in industry..

Strengths for MSc

Please see above. The students get exposure to course work, literature and research.

Strengths for PhD

Please see above. The students get opportunities to teach in the undergraduate programmes. The research projects cover a variety of modern and relevant areas. The students are encouraged to publish.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The EEC strongly recommends working on a clear and transparent set of assessment criteria, to help supervisors and students and to facilitate the procedures and make them more fair across the department. Equally, the exam setting and grading should be monitored better to ensure this is performed consistently and fair across the department and courses. The EEC advises to give these tasks to the already existing undergraduate and postgraduate study

committees (It is not clear what the role and tasks are of the internal evaluation committee which is mentioned in addition).
Moreover, it is surprising that the alignment and coherence of the programs, and the monitoring of the intended learning outcomes for courses and program is not addressed in the QA procedures (not in overall assessment, nor in the design and approval process of a new course), as the EEC deems this very important. It seems logical that this task also belongs to these undergraduate and postgraduate study committees. This alignment would need to be done before the departmental council decides on a new course or change in curriculum. The exact role(s) of the departmental council are not clear, esp. in relation to the teaching (and thus the undergraduate and graduate study committees).
Whereas external stakeholders are happy with the graduates of the department, they can and want to be more closely involved in the research and teaching of the department, e.g. in delivering (parts of) elective courses (also on transferable skills) and in internships for students. The EEC strongly recommends actively reaching out to them and making this happen. This is likely to also positively impact research collaborations and income.

Over the years, the student income has been highly fluctuating, making it difficult to provide multiple electives in the MSc/PhD) program (with sufficient students per course). Recruitment of esp. PhD students are very hard, since they will have to pay significant fees and do not get an income (as university student-scholarships are no longer available), which is in contrast to other places in Europe, where PhDs get a full salary. The ECC therefore advises to target students from the Middle-East, USA (both complex geopolitically currently) and Asia instead, i.e. countries with equivalent systems - and actually go to these countries and advertise the program, and/or use social media effectively (get advice from experts).

The Chemistry programmes are part of the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences with programs in Physics, Biological Sciences, Computer Sciences and Mathematics. Although elective courses can be done in the other programs, it might be interesting, in view of the low number of students and the complex societal problems requiring inter/multidisciplinary approaches and people, to develop combined specialised tracks. These need to be well thought through and should fit (and highlight) to the strengths of the faculty and for example align with the requirements of Cyprus challenges and industry. Communicating these well, will likely bring in more students into the faculty and department. At the same time, the external stakeholders indicated that they can and want to be more involved in research and teaching of the department.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc

The main recommendation of the ECC is on the alignment and coherence of the program, as well as the transparency in assessment criteria and exam setting and grading, as described above .

Areas of improvement and recommendations for MSc

The ECC strongly supports the transition of the MSc and PhD program to English, which should attract more international students. At the same time an active recruitment procedure should be developed, as described above.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

Please see above. Attracting good PhD students should be a priority.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant		
		BSc	MSc	PhD
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Sub-areas

- **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
- **2.2 Practical training**
- **2.3 Student assessment**

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.
- The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.
- The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.
- Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.
- Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.
- The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.
- Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.
- Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.
- The criteria for and method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.
- Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.
- Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.
- A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.
- Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.
- The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).
- How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?
- How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?
- How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?
- Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?
- How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?
- How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?
- **Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?**
- How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?
- **Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?**
- How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?
- How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Several parts of the quality assessment process require program specific assessment criteria (e.g. to obtain BSc, MSc or PhD degree), which have not been specified by the department. The discussions with the staff seem to suggest this is left to the supervisor and examiners.

Findings for BSc

BsC students have reported that they are very satisfied with the program, especially referring to the approachability and effort their teachers put into their courses to help them throughout their degree. The system of assigning an academic advisor for each student is also adding to the student-centred learning, teaching and assessment, along with the close relationship that students and teachers maintain with each other, which allows the teachers to spot any weaknesses with which they could help deal with early on, and the students also feeling more confident to approach them. They also mentioned the application of recorded lectures that are helpful with their studies, a reference that enhances the possibilities of combining on-site and e-learning initiatives and utilising technology more in courses. Another positive opinion of the students is the hands-on experience they acquire from the variety of laboratory courses that they have to attend and the 100% research-based diploma thesis. The students would like to see summer internships where they get more interaction with industries and become more ready-to-work. The diploma thesis is evaluated by two professors (the supervisor and another professor assigned by the department). After the end of each semester, the students complete an evaluation questionnaire, which allows them to give feedback about each course and teacher, concerning the achievement of the course's learning goals. In addition to that, the curriculum offers only a limited number of elective courses because of the low number of students and the limitation of the number of students per course, for it to be viable.the

Findings for MSc

The introduction of an exclusively English taught program is highly commended, since it prepares the students for dealing with bibliographic research, which will be of great help later on in the degree, when they will be asked to prepare their master's thesis, allowing them to seek opportunities abroad too. It also gives the opportunity to the department to attract more foreign students from around the world and become more competitive with other related English programmes, bringing new energy, culture, and ideas and offering more networking opportunities. The master's thesis is evaluated by three professors (the supervisor and two other professors selected by the supervisor and approved by the department's council and postgraduate studies committee). After the end of each semester, the students complete an evaluation questionnaire, which allows them to give feedback about each course and professor, concerning the achievement of the course's learning goals.

Findings for PhD

The introduction of an exclusively English taught program is highly commended, since it prepares the students for dealing with bibliographic research, which will be of great help later on in the degree, when they will be asked to prepare their doctoral dissertation, allowing them to seek opportunities abroad too. It also gives the opportunity to the department to attract more foreign students from around the world and become more competitive with other related English programmes, bringing new energy, culture, and ideas and offering more networking opportunities. In addition to that they are able to follow seminars and lectures in international conferences, where they can also present their own work, so that they are more confident and ready for their progress presentation and to defend their dissertation. The dissertation is evaluated by a committee of five members (the supervisor, two professors of the department, a member from another related department of the university and an academic member of another university). During their research stage the students have the independence to interact with the equipment, which adds on the hands-on experience that is acquired. Furthermore, the fact that PhD students get to work as teaching assistants offers them teaching experience in case they wish to pursue an academic career, though with a limitation

of being assigned to a maximum of two TAs per person per semester. After the end of each semester, the students complete an evaluation questionnaire, which allows them to give feedback about each course and professor, concerning the achievement of the course's learning goals. Despite the good expressions though, the students expressed their opinion about heavy workload and time-consuming literature studies before the research stage begins.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Strengths for BSc

There is adequate hands-on experience from laboratory courses and internships, which is something that the industry asks for and they are also satisfied with the level of the BSc graduates of the department. The more personal relations between staff and students, allow the second to feel more confident to ask questions and share their struggles.

Strengths for MSc

The decision to switch the program's language to English will better prepare the students for their degree and will provide opportunities for pursuing a career abroad. Also, this will impact the way of thinking of the students, through the interaction with the foreign students the program will attract.

Strengths for PhD

The decision to switch the program's language to English will better prepare the students for their degree and will provide opportunities for pursuing a career abroad. Furthermore, this will impact the way of thinking of the students, through the interaction with the foreign students the program will attract. The opportunity of the PhD students to freely interact with the equipment through which they are gaining additional hands-on experience, along with the early teaching experience that is provided from being assigned as TAs, also contribute to their effort of pursuing an industrial or academic career respectively.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The EEC strongly recommends working on a clear and transparent set of specific assessment criteria, to help supervisors and students and to facilitate the procedures and make them more fair across the department. Equally, the exam setting and grading should be monitored better to ensure this is performed consistently and fair across the department and courses. The ECC advises to give these tasks to the already existing undergraduate and postgraduate study committees (It is not clear what the role and tasks are of the internal evaluation committee which is mentioned in addition).
Moreover, it is surprising that the alignment and coherence of the programs, and the monitoring of the intended learning outcomes for courses and program is not addressed in the QA procedures (not in overall assessment, nor in the design and approval process of a new course), as the ECC deems this very important. It seems logical that this task also belongs to these undergraduate and postgraduate study committees. This alignment would need to be done before the departmental council decides on a new course or change in curriculum. The exact role(s) of the departmental council are not clear, esp. in relation to the teaching (and thus the undergraduate and graduate study committees).

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc

See above. It is recommended for the department to apply a mechanism of reviewing the content taught in each course between semesters/years and disciplines, and modify the curriculum, so that the students have a continuous interaction with the most important aspects of the subjects, to bridge the gaps and increase the consistency in success rates. They should also increase their effort in promoting Chemistry to attract more students, so that the program is able to offer more elective courses. Specific criteria should also be introduced for the evaluation of the diploma thesis (this could include for example marks for effort, quality and quantity of results, analysis)

Areas of improvement and recommendations for MSc

See above. The program is research-oriented which requires physical presence. Applying a combination of e-learning and on-site initiative could lead to more registrations, since this will also allow part-time students who wish to work at the same time to join the program. They should also increase their effort in promoting Chemistry to attract more students, so that the program is able to offer more elective courses. Specific criteria for assessment of the project would ensure fairness across the 3 member committee evaluations.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

See above. PhD students could be introduced earlier in the degree to the research stage. The department should also chase more fundings to support the PhD students via collaboration with other related departments and more proposal submissions (see earlier suggestions). Another suggestion is to increase the monthly income for a TA position.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		**Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant**		
		BSc	MSc	PhD
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

3. **Teaching staff** (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development
3.2. Teaching staff number and status
3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.
- Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.
- Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.
- Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.
- Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.
- Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.
- Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.

Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.
- The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.
- Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.

Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).
- Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.
- The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.
- Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.

- The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?
- How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?
- Is teaching connected with research?
- Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?
- What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?
- Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Experienced and highly motivated technical staff at the department teach at all levels together with the TAs and the faculty in the laboratories.
The strong focus on laboratory teaching and hands-on experiences enables the students to progress well to the next level, and ultimately to be a strong scientist.
The faculty professors all have PhD degrees from respected universities, and it appears that they mostly teach within their area of expertise.

Findings for BSc

See above.

Findings for MSc

MSc students are recruited to aid in teaching of BSc courses. This is paid work, and for many the only income during the MSc (beyond work outside the university). The MSc students can have two TA positions at a time. This provides for highly qualified and motivated TAs (e.g. laboratory teaching). However, the number of TA positions is limited and PhDs get a preference.
Experienced and highly motivated technical staff at the department teach at all levels together with the TAs and the faculty in the laboratories.
The strong focus on laboratory teaching and hands-on experiences enables the students to progress well to the next level, and ultimately to be a strong scientist for any position they want to pursue after.
The faculty professors all have PhD degrees from respected universities, and it appears that they mostly teach within their area of expertise.

Findings for PhD

PhD students are recruited to aid in teaching of BSc courses. This is paid work, and for many the only income during the PhD (beyond work outside the university). The PhD students can have two TA positions at a time. This provides for highly qualified and motivated TAs (e.g. laboratory teaching).
Experienced and highly motivated technical staff at the department teach at all levels together with the TAs and the faculty in the laboratories.
The strong focus on laboratory teaching and hands-on experiences enables the students to progress well to the next level, and ultimately to be a strong scientist.
The faculty professors all have PhD degrees from respected universities, and it appears that they mostly teach within their area of expertise.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Strengths for BSc

Highly personalized teaching by PhD students, faculty and technical staff. This provides for a safe and strong learning space.

Strengths for MSc

Highly personalized teaching by PhD students, faculty and technical staff. This provides for a safe and strong learning space.

Strengths for PhD

Highly personalized teaching by faculty and technical staff. This provides for a safe and strong learning space. The hands-on experience with equipment is valuable.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc, MSc and PhD

It is a bit concerning that solvent storage and chemical storage facilities are either insufficient or 'across the street' from the teaching and research labs. The EEC recommends coming up with safer and more practical solutions.
At the site visit it was apparent to the EEC that some teachers have taught the same course for a very long time. The ECC recommends having a rotational system for teaching the courses in the program, where students get exposed to new teachers from time to time, and teachers are forced to actively work on new courses and content.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for MSc and PhD

The costs of living in Cyprus requires that students need to take employment outside the university for their basic living costs, resulting in delays in their studies, and ultimately delays the time that passes before they can become a tax-paying member of the society. The EEC recommends higher salaries for the TA positions will be helpful.
Moreover, the ECC recommends that the department (and maybe multiple departments together) should work with the university to reinstate funded PhD studentships. Moreover, more effort of staff should go into obtaining research funding (for example from EU), which pays PhD students as well as their research, to become more competitive to other universities abroad

.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant		
		BSc	MSc	PhD
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

3. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Sub-areas

Student admission, processes and criteria
Student progression
Student recognition
Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.
- Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.
- Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.
- Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.
- Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:
    - institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
    - cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.
- Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

You may also consider the following questions:

- Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?
- How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?
- Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The EEC is satisfied with the general description of the BSc, MSc and PhD degrees, as well as with the descriptions from students, external stakeholders and technical staff. The admission criteria and protocols are clear and appropriate. The expectations are not always clear to the students. Moreover, the courses do not always seem to be well aligned in terms of content and learning outcomes, nor is exam setting and grading done in a consistent manner.
The number of students in all programs is low and highly fluctuates, making it difficult to offer an extensive program with multiple electives.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

A clear strength for all programs is the departmental infrastructure and the hands-on degree, especially the close supervision by academics and the interactions with the technical staff.

Strengths for BSc

Strengths for MSc

Strengths for PhD

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc

There is a big challenge in the recruitment of students, due to a series of factors. Staff indicated several factors: One is the size of Cyprus, and the fact that international recruitment is very limited; Second is competition with private universities that offer related degrees (e.g. pharmacy); thirdly the attraction of e-learning programs.
The department is keen to recruit more, and better students. Public engagement, especially with schools showcasing the underpinning of chemistry in all modern areas of interest (e.g. medicine, materials, the green transition) may encourage more students to choose chemistry.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for MSc and PhD

Over the years, the student income has been highly fluctuating, making it difficult to provide multiple electives in the MSc/PhD) program (with sufficient students per course). The EEC strongly supports English taught MSc and PhD programs, which should help attract more international students.

Recruitment of esp. PhD students are very hard, since they will have to pay significant fees and do not get an income (as university student-scholarships are no longer available), which is in contrast to other places in Europe, where PhDs get a full salary. The EEC therefore advises to target students from the Middle-East, USA (both complex geopolitically currently) and Asia instead, i.e. countries with equivalent systems - and actually go to these countries and advertise the program, and/or use social media effectively (get advice from experts). At the same time, staff are strongly encouraged to apply for research funding which includes PhD funding, to make them more attractive internationally.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		**Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant**		
		BSc	MSc	PhD
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

4. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

Teaching and Learning resources
Physical resources
Human support resources
Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- All resources are fit for purpose.
- Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.
- Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.

- Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.

5.4 Student support

Standards

- Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.
- Students are informed about the services available to them.
- Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.
- Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.

You may also consider the following questions:

- Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?
- What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?
- Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?
- What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?
- Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?
- How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?
- How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?
- How is student mobility being supported?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The teaching and learning resources are of high standard. The laboratories, infrastructure and equipment are of high standard and allow for hands-on experience to the students from the Bsc level and above. Because research and teaching are intertwined in a positive way, the findings apply to all programmes. Academics, technical staff and PhD students are involved in the teaching and learning environments as well as the equipment. Whereas some of the university finances cover the purchase of equipment and consumables, there is no money available for maintenance of important instrumentation and this is left to the technicians (which is very challenging). Despite being a small department with limited resources, the department is doing an admirable job and should be commended. Support is available to students both in their everyday learning environment and for personal support. The university also offers multiple opportunities for support and counselling, although none of the students we interacted with had used the services (or knew how to access them). E-learning resources are available to the students through the library services. Some classes offered recorded lectures which were commented favourably by the students.

Findings for BSc

See above

Findings for MSc

See above. When numbers are low, this impacts the number of electives that can be offered to students which limits the choice available to them. Part time study is offered which is taken when students need to work or have caring responsibilities.

Findings for PhD

See above. The students are assigned a 3 member committee to overlook their PhD. They also have to complete course requirements and literature surveys in the first two years. Part time study is possible, although it is very challenging to pursue a PhD part time.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The staff, both academic and technical, are an asset to the department and to all the degrees. Individual access and support from staff is highly valued and a strength of the department. The laboratories, equipment, IT support are also a strength. Students at all levels are allowed hands-on experience which is excellent. Online and physical space in the library is a great strength of the university and a great resource. This applies to all degrees.

Strengths for BSc

See above.

Strengths for MSc

See above.

Strengths for PhD

See above.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Ongoing maintenance of the equipment is an issue that the department tries to address as best as possible, which is admirable. Space is also constrained which impacts safety and recruitment-hopefully that can happen in the space vacated by the Biological Sciences. Part-time study is provided for, however funding is a real concern especially for PhD students who are severely impacted if funding is not available. The EEC recommends the department to engage with the university to impact the staff number algorithm that does not take into account the special needs of Chemistry to increase staff numbers. The department should also work closely with external stakeholders, from schools to government, to highlight the importance of Chemistry in our society and to solve societal challenges, which might put Chemistry and funding for Chemistry higher on everyone's agenda, so more students choose the programs and some extra funding is released.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc

See above

Areas of improvement and recommendations for MSc

See above

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

See above. Efforts to try to secure funding have been highlighted above.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		**Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant**		
		BSc	MSc	PhD
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

5. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

Selection criteria and requirements
Proposal and dissertation
Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.
- The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:
  - the stages of completion
  - the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme
  - the examinations
  - the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal
  - the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:
  - the chapters that are contained
  - the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography
  - the minimum word limit
  - the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation
- There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.
- The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.
- The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.
- The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:
    - regular meetings
    - reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
    - support for writing research papers
    - participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?

Findings for PhD

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The PhD students work closely with the academic staff who are research active within several areas of modern chemistry and areas of interest to the local environment. Several groups have external research grants and are part of interdisciplinary activities. We met with staff and students, visited the labs and examined the PhD theses, in addition to the report we received. The students have a 3 member committee that overlooks their studies and are finally examined by a 5 member committee that includes 2 external members from the department. The students take courses and prepare a literature review in the first 2 years and are encouraged to publish their research. Securing funding for PhD positions is a major issue. Those who do not have research funding may teach at the university for a maximum of two courses per semester, which is not enough taking into account the high costs of living.

Strengths of PhD

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The dedication of supervisors as well as the hands-on approach to the research is a great strength of the department, valued by the students. The high quality (knowledge and skills) of the graduates is valued by the external stakeholders who are keen to support and engage with the students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations of PhD

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Research funding indirectly helps teaching by providing more resources for students to do their research projects, as well as potentially (depending on the funding source) provide funding for PhDs directly (salary). To maximise the value of proposals for research funding, while recognising the inherently competitive nature of funding, the EEC encourages academics to consider joining larger bids, including in interdisciplinary efforts with other departments who have moved to the new campus such as Engineering and Medicine. In addition, the staff is advised to reach out to industry in Cyprus who seem eager to collaborate on applied research themes with the Department and can help in obtaining public private partnership type funding from for example the EU (or in special interesting cases directly fund research and positions) . Similarly, collaboration with European knowledge institutes and/or industry and applying for collaborative European grants is challenging, but strongly encouraged since it can bring in substantial funds and positions. The teaching opportunities are valued by the students, but the salary is still not enough to cover the cost of living, so a higher salary as is considered by the university would be a welcomed addition.

While the students were happy and did not raise any unresolved issues, a more transparent set of expectations and criteria for completion of the PhD (as addressed elsewhere in the report) as well as an independent way to mitigate any disagreements is strongly advised by the EEC.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-areas		**Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant**
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks, which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of each programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The EEC is left with the overall impression that the programs of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Cyprus are of high standard. The department is able to perform her teaching program well in all aspects, esp. given the relatively small size of the faculty and the tight financial situation.

The academic faculty is relatively small, and significant changes in the staff composition will take place in the coming years due to the age-profile of the current academic staff (5 retirements). Moreover, the faculty has an ambition to grow (if allowed) to 20 staff members. That means that important decisions on the new profile of the department are apparent. This is a huge change and effort, and successful recruitment (nationally and internationally) will be of the utmost importance. It is the impression of the EEC that this is a fantastic opportunity to bring new energy and science to the department, faculty and Cyprus, ensuring a strong research and educational profile. It is also a great opportunity for the current staff to grow into leadership and mentoring roles.

The EEC was impressed with the types and amount of modern analytical chemistry facilities in the department, and the fact that instruments and laboratories (old and new) function well. It is the impression of the EEC that this can be ascribed to the strong and dedicated technical staff. The modern facilities also indicate foresight on behalf of the department and the academic staff to secure resources for this important area. The fact that students get hands-on experience with modern equipment makes them strong candidates for future jobs.

The EEC met with groups of students and external stakeholders (including local industry) and all agreed: the Department is a great place, delivering high quality graduates with the right sets of skills, and they enjoy studying there or collaborating with the department. In fact, the external stakeholders would like to see more collaboration, in terms of teaching and research, which the department needs to activate immediately to help them with their education (e.g. electives and student internships), research and possible research income.

The department is well managed. Despite being a small department, there are many administrative tasks. Efficiency and transparency is important, for staff and students, either it being in assessment criteria, grading or career track requirements. In a time where large changes to the faculty staff are imminent, it is even more important to ensure that a sufficient level of clear, transparent, formal processes and quality assurance is in place and maintained. This to ensure fair processes for students and staff.

The key challenges facing the department in prioritized order are:

1) Expansion of the scientific staff. This is a challenge for several reasons. Both the large number of positions that need to be re-filled due to retirements and the wish to expand the size of the faculty complicates this issue. The autonomy of the department is limited, hence agility in the hiring process does not appear to exist. The funding is challenging and new hires must be competitive in the funding race as well as fit the research and teaching strategies of the department. Encouragingly, this is currently the case. We are strongly supporting the English-taught MSc degree that may enhance the chances of attracting international faculty members. We recommend being careful with hiring strictly in the “traditional sub-disciplines”and attempt to focus on modern ‘research themes’, which may enhance chances to attract research funding as well as novel teaching directions. We recommend that a process is started as soon as possible to pro-actively identify candidates for the recruitment of faculty hires in the coming years. Here, all internal and external stakeholders should contribute.

When hiring new faculty members at the interphase between the classical disciplines new opportunities arise, and with that potential new challenges. The EEC strongly recommends taking experience and ambition within teaching activities into consideration when identifying candidates; this is of key importance for the smooth running of the Chemistry degree programs department (and might ideally lead to novel, timely courses, maybe even collaborative, interdisciplinary tracks) .

In addition, we want to reiterate here that the EEC strongly disagrees with the university applied 'algorithm' to determine the maximum size of departments at the University of Cyprus. This is a type of management tool that we understand, but we disagree with the fact that this is one algorithm for all. A chemistry department, and for that matter most STEM departments, covers a very broad scope in their educational programs, including theory AND practical (laboratories), making it highly labour- and cost-intensive esp. since one also needs to ensure safety of all involved (something students need to be trained in). If the faculty staff is too small to execute excellent teaching, the whole department will suffer; training students to think and act independently and safely in their research activities is of key importance.

2) Transparent assessment criteria and protocols, including exam setting and grading are essential for staff and students, to manage expectations and run a fair program. The department is strongly recommended to implement and communicate these, as we have detailed in this report. In addition, the periodical revision and adaptation of the programs of study, including alignment or courses and learning outcomes, is essential to maintain the quality of the program (at all levels) and should be part of the QAS - see our recommendations in this report.

3) Student numbers are fluctuating and low, which is a concern for the sustainability of the programs, and already causes limitations in for example in the number and types of electives students can take. Student recruitment is difficult, but the department is introducing an English-taught MSc degree to be launched in 2026. The EEC recommends focusing on attracting motivated students in order to optimize the return on the teaching investments made by the department. For this reason we recommend strong focus on advertising this new program as effectively as possible internationally, in countries with similar program systems (i.e. self-funded MSc and PhD programs, in contrast to Europe where most are positions with salary).

The EEC is confident that a cohort of international MSc students can transform the scientific environment with new energy and focus. These students may not be academically excellent when they arrive, but the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff will ensure that they leave fully equipped for a future in research or industry. The graduates from the department are the strongest ambassadors for the university, and may be good role models in recruitment and promotion of the department. If (when) a cohort of international students will arrive with different educational backgrounds, the teaching staff will be faced with a new difficult challenge: alignment of expectations! While the 2-year Msc has one full year of course work, it can be a challenge to identify the appropriate scientific level to teach at, and in this case teaching/learning outcomes must be very well described and communicated in order to avoid frustrations (both among the students as well as the teachers).

4) Attracting research funding is difficult due to the highly competitive funding reality; this is true both with respect to European and local funding opportunities. In a relatively small department, where teaching and research is integrated this is an all-round important issue, but even more important as it can support PhD students directly (salary) as well as provide research resources for students to execute their research projects. As mentioned, the ECC recommends the department to use the opportunities in the process of hiring new faculty members to construct strong teams of scientists that can pursue funding opportunities as teams - either as teams of chemists from the department or as cross-department, or international initiatives. Moreover, the staff should actively pursue applied research and funding opportunities in collaboration with external stakeholders, who are very willing to do so.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Professor Sophia Yaliraki	
Professor Michael Pittelkow	
Professor Moniek Tromp	
Dr. Elena Ionnou Papayianni	
Charalampos Christodoulou	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 23 April 2026